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For Immediate Release
March 16, 2005

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Senate approves election district consolidation and elimination of diploma mills

LANSING – Legislation to eliminate the judicial election districts in Kalamazoo County and keep “diploma mills” from operating within the State of Michigan passed the Senate today said Sen. Tom George, sponsor of the bills.

“This will give the citizens of Kalamazoo the right to vote for their judges,” said George, R-Texas Township. “Both the judges and the citizens have asked for this right and there is no good reason to deny them this request.”

Senate Bill 193 was introduced in response to concerns that since the recent consolidation of the Kalamazoo County district courts, a citizen may have a case presided over by a judge for whom they were unable to vote. While the Kalamazoo County District Courts were consolidated in 1999, the three judicial election districts (City of Kalamazoo, City of Portage and Kalamazoo County) were not.

Introduced in the previous legislative session, the bill was originally passed by both chambers but was vetoed by the governor.

Senate Bill 136 would create the Authentic Credentials in Education Act and would prohibit a person from knowingly issuing or manufacturing a false academic credential.

“This legislation is aimed at internet-based diploma mills that grant degrees for a fee without requiring any academic work,” George said. “It will help protect the integrity of college degrees earned the old-fashioned way – through study – and it will help protect employers from people presenting fraudulent credentials.”

Further, an individual who did not have an academic credential would be prohibited from knowingly using or claiming to have that academic credential to obtain employment or a promotion or higher compensation in employment; to obtain admission to a qualified institution; or in connection with any loan, business, trade, profession or occupation.

SB’s 193 and 136 now head to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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